

Remarks

Assignee notes with appreciation the withdrawal of the objections and non-art rejections that were made in the previous office action. Claims 1-31 stand rejected over a number of references on various grounds.

To simplify the Examiner's task of reconsidering the rejections in light of assignee's remarks below, assignee continues to leave claims 1 and 11 pending without seeking allowance of those claims in this application. Before allowance of the application, assignee plans to put dependent claims 2, 6, and 9-10 into independent form.

CLAIM 2

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,782,245 to Henry. The claim calls for "a plurality of conduction paths having two opposite ends . . . wherein each end of each conduction path can be connected . . . to no more than one connector."

The rejection asserts that, in the system of Henry, "[e]ach end of the conductive path is connected to only one connector." In its previous Response, assignee pointed out that two connectors of the arrangement depicted in Henry's Fig. 2 are able to connect simultaneously to "multi-conductor trace" 34 via receptacles 20 and 22." The pertinent requirement of claim 2 is that each end of each conduction path can connect electrically and mechanically to no more than one connector."

The presence of trace 34 in Henry's disclosed arrangement is clearly contrary to the above limitation of claim 2. Regarding multi-conductor trace 32, the presence of switch 52 keeps the trace's multiple conductors from being considered "a plurality of conduction paths" that would meet the limitations of claim 2. Switch 52 selectably connects trace 32 to numerous connectors other than connector 14 and receptacle 18, and thus each end of each "conduction path" in trace 32 is not required to "connect electrically and mechanically to no more than one connector."

Thus Henry fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 2, and indeed teaches away by disclosing a preferred embodiment that does not meet the requirement. Therefore claim 2 is allowable.

CLAIMS 6 AND 14

Claims 6 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,782,245 to Henry. Assignee has previously responded to the rejection by pointing out that neither Henry nor the rejection citing it makes any mention of a connector having a single mating interface, as recited in claims 6 and 14. Again, Henry discloses connectors having 15 pins (see, e.g., C6/L8), 25 pins (C4/L56), and 34 pins (C6/L6), none which has a "single mating interface." The most recent Office Action says only that "[i]t is inherent that each connector has a mating interface," which misses the point. Henry simply does not teach or suggest a connector of a type having a single mating interface.

Accordingly, assignee respectfully requests allowance of claims 6 and 14.

CLAIMS 18-23, 25-29

Claims 18-23, 25-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, now on the ground that they are anticipated by "Yang," apparently U.S. Patent 5,795,193. Yang (FIG. 1) discloses a busbar 16 having two arms 52 extending from a bolt retention bracket 50. Fuses 24, 26 are inserted into receptacles 28, 30 formed on an upper housing 12 such that each fuse makes electrical contact with one of the arms 52 of busbar 16.

The specific structural and electrical arrangements of fuse receptacles that claims 18-29 recite are not taught or suggested by Yang, the previously cited U.S. Patent 4,372,638 to Sohler, or any other reference of record. The Examiner's attention is directed to the particular limitations of independent claims 18 and 25 quoted below with emphasis. Claim 18:

a column of fuse receptacles, each of the receptacles including first and second terminals; a first electrical conductor coupling together the first terminals of the receptacles and leading from a first end of the column of fuse receptacles; and a second electrical conductor substantially parallel in orientation with the first . . . coupling together the second

terminals of the receptacles and leading from a second end, opposite the first end, of the column of fuse receptacles.

Yang's busbar 16 could not be construed as having both the first and second electrical conductors of claim 18, which connect fuses electrically in parallel. Yang's drawings make clear that arms 52 of busbar 16 connect to separate rows of fuses, not to opposite terminals of the same fuses.

Claim 25:

a matrix of fuse receptacles having a plurality of columns and a plurality of rows, each receptacle having first and second terminals; a first plurality of electrical conductors coupling together the first terminals of the receptacles in each column; and a second plurality of electrical conductors coupling together the second terminals of the receptacles in each column; whereby the fuse receptacles in each column are electrically connected in parallel.

This claim is even more clearly remote from Yang's disclosure. As discussed above with regard to claim 18, Yang does not disclose any connection of fuses electrically in parallel, an arrangement that claim 25 explicitly recites. But Yang also fails to teach or suggest two pluralities of conductors that couple together different terminals of fuses. Yang's busbar 16 has just two arms and clearly could not be construed as having such multiple pluralities of conductors.

In sum, neither Yang nor Sohler nor any other reference of record provides any teaching or suggestion of the limitations of claims 18 or 25. Nor do these references provide any suggestion or motivation for a modification or combination to meet the limitations. Accordingly, assignee respectfully requests allowance of independent claim 18, its dependent claims 19-23, independent claim 25, and that claim's dependents 26-29.

CLAIMS 9 AND 17

Claims 9 and 17, which both call for "multiple fuses that are interconnected in parallel," stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Henry, now in view of

Yang. However, neither reference teaches or suggests fuses interconnected in parallel, i.e., electrically parallel. Thus claims 9 and 17 are allowable.

CLAIMS 10 AND 32

Claim 10 continues to stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,782,245 to Henry. As discussed in assignee's previous response, however, Henry does not teach or suggest a packaging shell as claimed. (See assignee's FIGS. 20-21 and descriptions at specification P7/L5-10.)

Again, the rejection fails to point out where Henry makes any mention of packaging structure, much less a teaching or suggestion of the packaging shell recited in claim 10. Indeed, Henry includes no such teaching or suggestion. Consequently, claim 10 is allowable along with method claim 32, which also calls for the use of a packaging shell as discussed above.

CLAIMS 30-31

Claims 30-31 continue to stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over U.S. Patent 3,573,704 to Tarver alone. Claim 30 recites

A first portion fabricated from conductive material and including a substantially circular first aperture; and a second portion molded from nonconductive material . . . including a substantially rectangular second aperture that is larger in area than the first aperture.

The rejection acknowledges that Tarver does not meet the "larger in area" limitation but dismisses that limitation as requiring "a mere change in size, which would involve only routine skill in the art." As assignee as pointed out, the rejection fails to show where Tarver teaches or suggests the use of a portion fabricated from conductive material and another portion molded from nonconductive material.

Again, the rejection fails to appreciate the significance of the size difference, substantially coaxial arrangement, and material properties of the first and second portions that are all recited in claim 30. The claimed connector can advantageously accommodate cable having a rectangular cross section while avoiding the need for a

square aperture in conductive material. See page 13, line 24 through page 14, line 9 of assignee's specification.

Assignee has previously pointed out, and repeated above, how the rejection fails to show how Tarver or any other reference of record teaches or suggests the subject matter of claim 30. Unfortunately, the most recent Office Action fails to respond to assignee's points on this issue. Assignee thus respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections against claim 30 and its dependent claim 31.

CONCLUSION

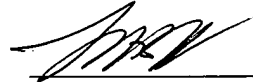
In view of the remarks above, assignee respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections against independent claims 18, 24, and 30 and dependent claims 2, 6, 9-10, 14, 17, 19-23, 26-29, and 31-32. When allowed, assignee intends to put the dependent claims into independent form.

As mentioned in its previous Response, assignee has identified certain subject matter that appears patentable over art of record, although much of it is recited in dependent claims. Assignee has argued art rejections only of certain claims in the hopes that prosecution of this application would be somewhat more focused. Assignee continues to present arguments relevant to only those dependent claims being at issue rather than placing them all into independent form. Again, as to the claims not argued, assignee does not seek an indication of allowance at this time, although some of the subject matter may be reinstated.

Please feel free to contact the undersigned if it would in any way advance prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,
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by its attorney:

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